

Mountfield Parish Council Tree Warden Annual Update

Ash dieback:

The disease is prevalent throughout our local woodlands and is passed by windborne spores. It is estimated that up to 80% of our ash population will succumb to the disease. Unfortunately, it is compounded by environmental factors such as heat and drought that add to trees stress, and the last two or three years has seen an acceleration in tree mortality due to prolonged spells of lack of rain. However, it is important that not all trees with ash dieback are felled as some may develop immunity from the disease and survive to help regenerate the population. Therefore, if you are a landowner with woodland it is worth following the guidance in the following publication:
<https://treecouncil.org.uk/guidance-resources/ash-dieback-disease-a-guide-for-tree-owners/>

Felling licenses, woodland grants and management plans:

I have noticed a growing trend of increasingly long delays in the application and approval of grants and felling licenses over the last few years. These are generally issued through the Forestry Commission, with a felling license required for felling trees over a certain volume, and grants for woodland creation, Rhododendron control and deer management. Similarly woodland management plans that support grant applications are taking much longer to be approved. If you are a woodland owner who plans to carry out work in their woodlands or apply for a grant, I would suggest it would be wise to start planning now, and bear in mind that the process is currently lengthy and time consuming. In some cases, I would be potentially planning a year ahead to allow for consultation and approval.

Appreciate your local trees and woods:

We are lucky to live in a region with some of the highest woodland cover in the UK. Being able to walk out of your front door and take a walk in the woods in minutes is something that a lot of others must make a special effort to do. Whilst it's great to get out and explore its worth remembering that woodlands are a working environment and going straying from the beaten path may not be appreciated at certain times of the year. Mountfield has a number of deer managers actively working to attempt to bring down the exploding deer population in the area which cause much damage to the woodland habitats. Its worth sticking to the public rights of way from the start of November to the end of March, which is the main part of the culling season.

Report anti-social behaviour to protect our woodlands:

Quad bikes and dirt bikes being ridden illegally through the woods causes much damage to the woodland soils and is on the increase locally. You can call 101 and report it to

police who will generally send the rural policing unit to catch them in the act. Similarly, fly tipping should be reported via the East Sussex Highways website if it is located on the roadside verge. Over time waste will be blown into neighbouring woodland where it will build up and metals and plastic will pollute the soils. If its reported promptly and cleared it does not encourage others to do the same and keeps our local area looking good. The local deer population have no road sense and will regularly cross the highway where it runs through woodland. If you have the misfortune to hit one or witness someone else who has, and the deer is injured in the road or verge call 101, and the police will arrange for a deer warden to attend.

And finally, plant a tree!

Even if you have a small garden, with the right guidance and advice you can still plant a tree and benefit from what it can provide. Whether it provides you with fruit, shade, habitat for birds and wildlife or is just nice to look at, a tree can add value to your garden. I have found English Woodlands at Burrow Nursery in Heathfield really helpful, and they have a good range of species and accessories. They can provide you with advice and guidance on what tree is good for the space you have, how to successfully plant and look after it, and they can even deliver it too.